



# Domestic Violence

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Thanks to:

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# Overview

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- Definition
- Incidence and Prevalence
- Impact on the Health Care System
- Screening Questions
- Child Maltreatment Screening



# Definitions

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- ▮ Family Violence - all violence that occurs inside a family unit. Includes partner, child, sibling, parent and elder abuse.
- ▮ Domestic Violence - violence which one adult (adolescent) intimate inflicts on another.



# History

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- ▮ Wife-beating previously accepted in many cultures.
- ▮ British common law allowed men to “chastise” wife with any “reasonable instrument.
- ▮ 1895 Married Women’s Poverty Act
- ▮ 1978 National Coalition Against DV



# History (cont.)

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- ▮ 1980's first healthcare programs
- ▮ 1992 National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
- ▮ 1992 JCAHO
- ▮ 1994 AAMC Guidelines FV Education
- ▮ **1996 National DV Hotline**
  - ▮ **1-800-799-SAFE**
- ▮ 2006: Reauthorized Violence Against Women Act



# POWER and CONTROL

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- ▮ Actual or threatened physical or sexual abuse
- ▮ Psychological
- ▮ Social Isolation
- ▮ Deprivation
- ▮ Intimidation
- ▮ Economic



# Cycle of Violence

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- ▮ Phase 1 - Tension Building Phase
- ▮ Phase 2 - Battering
- ▮ Phase 3 - Honeymoon Phase





# Incidence and Prevalence

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- ▮ Every 9 seconds a woman is abused
- ▮ 12 million women involved in abusive relationship; approximately 20% of all adult women
- ▮ 1 in 5 women victimized reported 3 or more assaults in last 6 mo.
- ▮ Affects one in two families



# Military Incidence and Prevalence

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- Rate used to be cited as greater in the military up to last few years
- Child abuse 12.2 per 1,000 for civilian vs 5.1 per 1,000 children in Army
- Past 7 years steady decline
- Defense Task Force on DV
  - <http://www.dtic.mil/domesticviolence/>



# Impact on Health Care System

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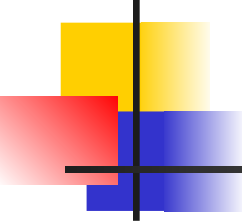
- ▮ Leading cause of injury to women between ages 15-44.
- ▮ >15% women seen in ED are victims DV.
- ▮ 25% women who attempt suicide
- ▮ 25% women using psychiatric services
- ▮ 20-25% battered women are pregnant
- ▮ 45% women in alcohol detox programs



# Lethality

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- ▮ 42% female homicide victims are killed by their husbands or boyfriends
- ▮ Women who leave batterers are at 75% greater risk of being killed
- ▮ Availability of weapons increases risk of death 12 times

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- ▮ 87% battered women said they would prefer to discuss problems with primary health care provider YET
  - ▮ Medical professionals are rated least effective in helping abused women



# Why Physicians Fail to Diagnose DV

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## ▮ **Patient Factors**

- ▮ Fear of retribution
- ▮ Shame and humiliation
- ▮ Feeling they deserved abuse
- ▮ May feel protective of partner
- ▮ Rationalization
  - ▮ Injuries not “severe enough”, background, unrecognized sx
- ▮ Feel doctor not knowledgeable, doesn’t care, too busy



# Why Physicians Fail to Diagnose DV

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## ▮ **Physician Factors**

- ▮ Physician's own beliefs and motivations
- ▮ Fear of opening Pandora's Box
- ▮ Close identification with victim
  - ▮ “Just like me, so it couldn't happen”
- ▮ Own fear of vulnerability and lack of control
- ▮ Fear of offending patient
- ▮ Time constraints
- ▮ Lack of training



# Why Physicians Fail to Diagnose DV

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- ▢ **Structural Factors**

- ▢ Lack of privacy
- ▢ Language barriers





There is no “Typical”  
victim or batterer of DV .

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Regardless of gender, race,  
ethnicity, age, socioeconomic  
or educational status



# Victim Characteristics

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- ▢ Gender
  - ▢ 95% women
- ▢ Ethnic and socioeconomic status
  - ▢ Social inconsistency
  - ▢ Interracial or mixed religion marriages
- ▢ Age – more common under 30
  - ▢ 50% elder abuse is partner abuse
  - ▢ 1 in 10 teens abusive dating relationship



# Victim Characteristics

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- ▢ Marital Status
  - ▢ Separation/divorce increase risk
- ▢ Personality Traits—probably not
- ▢ Pregnancy – high risk time
  - 70+% pregnant or parenting teens beaten
  - Date rape = 60% all rapes; most between 16-24



# Victim Characteristics

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- ▮ Sexual Orientation
- ▮ Disabilities
- ▮ Immigration Status
- ▮ Alcohol and Drug use (consequence)
- ▮ Family History
  - ▮ Prior victims of child abuse/DV may not be at risk once thought



# Why women don't leave

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- ▮ Fear of escalation of violence
- ▮ Lack of alternative housing, employment, finances
- ▮ Believe children need intact family
- ▮ Immobilized by psychological or physical trauma
- ▮ Cultural, religious or family values
- ▮ Still loves him
- ▮ Violence is her fault



# Clues from the History

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- ▮ History incident not consistent with injury
- ▮ Delay in seeking presentation
- ▮ “Accident-prone” history
- ▮ Suicide attempts or depression
- ▮ Repetitive psychosomatic complaints
- ▮ Non-compliance with medical regimen



# Clues from Physical Exam

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- ▮ Hide injuries - clothing, glasses
- ▮ Injury patterns not consistent accidental trauma
- ▮ Injuries suggestive defensive posture
- ▮ Multiple injuries in different stages healing
- ▮ Any injury during pregnancy
- ▮ Elderly with dementia - examine genitalia



# Screening

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- Always ask questions in privacy.
- Select questions which you are comfortable with
- Routinely screen female patients
- Ask direct questions
- Be nonjudgmental and appear concerned
- Don't minimize situation
- Respect her final decision





# Screening

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- ▮ Questions can be part of HPI, social hx, PMH or ROS
- ▮ Offer the option of “sometimes” as a response
- ▮ Should be part of any routine health assessment or H&P
- ▮ Add box or notation on chart for DV screen. Yes or No



# Framing Questions

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- ▮ Because violence is so common in women's lives, I now ask every woman I see about domestic violence
- ▮ I don't know if this is a problem for you, but many women I see are dealing with an abusive relationship, so I've started asking about domestic violence routinely.



# Framing Questions

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- We now know domestic violence is a very common problem. About 20% of women in this country are abused by their partners. Has that ever happened to you ?



# Framing Questions

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- Because so many women in my practice are involved with someone who hits them, threatens them, continually puts them down, or tries to control them, I now ask all my patients about abuse.



# Framing Questions

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- Some women think they deserve abuse because they have not lived up to their partners' expectations, but no matter what someone has or hasn't done, no one deserves to be beaten. Have you been hit or threatened because of something you did or didn't do?



# Direct Questions

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- ▮ Did someone hit you ? Who was it?  
Was it your partner/husband?
- ▮ Has your partner or ex-partner  
ever hit you or physically hurt you?  
Has he ever threatened to hurt  
you or someone close to you?



# Direct Questions

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- I'm concerned that your symptoms may have been caused by someone hurting you or someone close to you. Has someone been hurting you?



# Direct Questions

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- ▮ Does your partner ever try to control you by threatening to hurt you or your family?
- ▮ Has your partner ever tried to restrict your freedom or keep you from doing things that were important to you ? (like going to school, working, seeing your friends or family)





# Direct Questions

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- ▮ Does your partner frequently belittle you, insult you and blame you ?
- ▮ Do you feel controlled or isolated by your partner ?
- ▮ Do you ever feel afraid of your partner? Do you feel you are in danger? Is it safe for you to go home?
- ▮ Is your partner jealous? Does he frequently accuse you of infidelity?



# Indirect Questions

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- Have you been under any stress lately? Are you having any problems with your partner? Do you ever argue or fight? Do the fights ever become physical? Are you ever afraid? Have you ever gotten hurt?



# Indirect Questions

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- How are things going in your relationship/ marriage ? All couples argue sometimes. Are you having fights? Do you physically fight?



# Indirect Questions

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- ▮ You mentioned your partner loses his temper with the children. Can you tell me more about that? Has he ever hit or threatened to physically harm you or the children?



# Indirect Questions

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- You mentioned your partner uses alcohol. How does he act when he is intoxicated? Does his behavior ever frighten you? Does he ever become violent?



# Partner Violence Screen

Feldhaus KM, et. al. JAMA 1997; 277:1357-61.

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- 1 question addresses physical violence
  - Have you been hit, kicked, punched or otherwise hurt by someone within the past year? If so by whom?
- 2 questions address perception of safety
  - Do you feel safe in your current relationship?
  - Is there a partner from a previous relationship who is making you feel unsafe now?



# Documentation

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- ▮ History - describe abuse in victims words
- ▮ Record suspicions on record. Risk assessment.
- ▮ Referrals, police intervention, reporting etc.
- ▮ Education and intervention



# Screen for Safety

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- ▮ Is she safe to go home?
- ▮ Is there a support system?
- ▮ Is she suicidal or homicidal?
- ▮ Alternatives to going home
- ▮ Are children involved?





# Screen for Safety

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- ▮ Were the police called?
- ▮ Where is the abuser now?
- ▮ Has the abuser threatened to kill?
- ▮ Was a weapon involved?



# Provide Reassurance

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- ▮ Validate her visit
- ▮ Let her know help is available
- ▮ Provide materials for support and crisis hotlines



# Resources

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- ▮ National services can help get to local
- ▮ **National DV Hotline** (24 hrs)
  - ▮ <http://www.ndvh.org/>
  - ▮ 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- ▮ **National Women Abuse Prevention Center**
  - ▮ (202) 857-0216
- ▮ **Family Violence Prevention Fund**
  - ▮ 1-800-Rx-Abuse
- ▮ **National Coalition Against DV**
  - ▮ <http://www.ncadv.org/>



# Mandatory Reporting

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- Some states - social services agency, police
- Many states have laws requiring physician to notify third party if they believe patient may harm that individual
- ACEP against mandatory reporting to criminal justice authorities



# DoD Regulations

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- Mandatory reporting all spouse and child abuse
- 1981 specific programs mandated for each service - Directive 6400.1
  - Army and Navy - split responsibility command and medical department assets.
  - Marine - 100% command
  - Air Force - 100% medical



# Myths in Military

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- Always results in punishment
- AD member will lose job/rank
- Provider determines if abuse has occurred
- Only required to report substantiated cases
- Demographics are different
- You can be charged with falsification report if not substantiated



# Military Compensation

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- Financial protection to spouse if AD member discharged for offense “involves abuse of then-current spouse or dependant child”
- 12-36 months
- Monthly stipend and benefits when AD member has loss benefits due to court martial or separation



# Military Compensation

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- Terminates with remarriage or if AD member resides in home
- Retirement benefits - Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act





# Questions?

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# Partner Violence Screen

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- Feldhaus KM, et. al.: Accuracy of 3 Brief Screening Questions for Detecting Partner Violence in the ED. *JAMA*, May 1997.
- 1 question addresses physical violence, 2 questions address women's perception of her safety
- Able to detect large number of women with history partner violence.



# Partner violence screen

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- Prevalence: ~14% of women screened
- Findings of PVS questions
  - Sensitivity: 65-72%
  - Specificity: 80-84%
  - Positive Predictive Value: 51.3 - 63.4%
  - Negative Predictive Value: 88%



# Child Maltreatment

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- ▮ Remember relationship between DV and child abuse within home
- ▮ Interview child separate from parent
- ▮ Interview parents separately
- ▮ Open-ended questions
- ▮ Child will be loyal to parent



# Red Flags

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- History incompatible with type or degree of injury
- History vague or parent unaware
- History changes
- Contradictory history by parents
- History impossible



# Red Flags

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- Significant delay in seeking treatment
- Inappropriate parental concern
- Pathologic parent-child interaction
- Repeated visits for accidents or injury
- Repeated fracture
- Repeated ingestions